

THE INSURGENT



Charlie Kirk Ran Out of Town, Speaks at Golf Club in Creswell: Local Antifa Wins

By: Barbara Berkeley and Dorian Blue

Charlie Kirk, the face of the right-wing organization Turning Point USA, spoke on October 27th at the Emerald Valley Golf Club. It is a leg of his Exposing Critical Racism Tour, which is traversing college towns across the country. Originally, the event was going to be on the University of Oregon campus, but the university has since denied affiliation with them. The venue changed three more times after that, the first being the Graduate Hotel, then the Holiday Inn in Springfield, and finally, the Golf Club. After word got out about the event, opposition was swift. Organizers of the event announced that the venue address and directions will be provided 24 hours before the event in an effort to keep themselves away from the justified push back they faced.

Turning Point USA is an organization that was founded in 2012 to challenge leftist and liberal ideas on college campuses, and known mostly for posting incendiary and trolling content online. Funded by wealthy conservative

interests, they want to both incite the left and indoctrinate anyone they can through a proto-fascist approach, with subtler tactics than overt fascists.

They are also well known for their Professor Watchlist, where they regularly add profiles on faculty who are part of the “intolerant left.” On January 6th, the day of the capitol insurrection, Charlie Kirk proudly declared in a Tweet that “this historic event will likely be one of the largest and most consequential in American history...Turning Point Action are honored to help make this happen, sending 80+ buses full of patriots to DC to fight for this president.” Though quickly deleted, it points to the dark intentions that lurk just below the surface.



The journey to Turning Point USA was arduous, as expected, for Charlie Kirk was booted from the city of Eugene thanks to the work of local antifa cells. We drove down a poorly-lit highway, eight miles from campus. We were told upon arrival that the event had reached capacity, but getting into the overflow room was comically easy. There was no “airport level” security as promised on the Eventbrite page, only two men in suits trying to be intimidating. The lobby was a sea of middle-aged white people donning flannels and vests, with a smattering of young republicans. Nobody had masks on. Charlie Kirk’s speech was broadcast from large speakers. One quick-thinking man propped up his phone, playing the livestream. The crowd smiled and nodded, cheering when Kirk said something particularly bigoted, or made a joke at the right juncture.

The first person I struck up a conversation with was a woman in her forties, with blonde hair and a bad tan. She recommended we try Ivermectin for preventing COVID. Next, a man passed by me in the crowd. He wore a vest with many patches, but the one that caught my eye read, “My dick is hard for America.” I wondered if that was true. He had a much larger patch that read “PROUD BOYS OF PORTLAND.” It was appalling, but not surprising, to see an overt Nazi walking around, welcome at a mainstream conservative event.

We lasted for about an hour before packing up and leaving. Charlie Kirk made more jokes about Idaho being amazing and Oregon football than he talked about Critical Race Theory; yet Kirk commanded the room he spoke to, filled to the brim with eager conservatives, some of which traveled hours to come see him. Having a dialogue with the people of Eugene was never the point -- he was speaking to the same base he always does.



Warehousing Homeless in Eugene

This might be a refugee camp, at best it's warehousing the homeless

By: Fern

In a landscape of warehouses and factories off Garfield Street, The City of Eugene has opened its new Safe Sleep Site for vehicles and RVs. The newly laid gravel landscape has capacity for 44 vehicles and 80 people. On first look the site appears sparsely populated, but managers emphasize that many folks go to work during the day.

The City of Eugene opened its first sanctioned safe sleep site at 310 Garfield Street on October 4th. Residents of the temporary camps set up on 13th Avenue and Washington Jefferson Park were given initial priority to move to the site, with the focus of the 310 location being for long term RV and car parking. It is clear that the city is using the opening of the Safe Sleep Site to justify a new round of parking sweeps but the site's capacity is a drop in the bucket for RVs parked in Eugene. Indeed police gave a five day deadline for parked vehicles to be moved the day the site opened. Site manager Roxanne O’Brien said, “the site was full the first day and has a 75-person waiting list as well as 10-15 requests daily.”

“When you consider Oregon is 47th in the nation for available affordable housing, the people we do manage to get into housing we use creative solutions, find people they get along with, get them into programs, and that kind of stuff,” said O’Brien. The most surprising thing is that the site only employs two staff members which is in no way sustainable. The city looks like it has gotten itself into a project that could very quickly become a refugee camp. In order for conditions to not spiral immediately, the city is going to need another half dozen full time staff as well as a spread of part time and volunteer workers.



Inexplicably, there is currently no full time case work going on at the site and without a functional office it's doubtful the situation will improve. Despite positive intentions by site planners, the safe site appears to have been constructed rather quickly. The stark lack of infrastructure or community space makes the lot feel cold and empty. The two designated warming centers for guests are newly assembled garages with empty concrete floors. The site team is currently unable to use a bus with a commercial kitchen because of lack of funding for food.

There are three more sites currently being planned and are gearing up for completion, including the large Tyree Oil building next door to the new 310 lot. The Tyree Oil warehouse at 410 Garfield right across the railroad tracks will accommodate between 70-80 residents in tents. Each tent will be provided by the city. Inexplicably, the large Tyree Oil warehouse will not be heated. This situation can not be described in any other way other than warehousing the homeless.

Residents of the safe sight must abide

by certain procedures in order to remain eligible for a parking spot. The list of procedures is exhaustive and demands that guests of the site keep their area clean, maintain sobriety, and observe community standards of order. Upon signing the agreement, residents must agree to SVPD reserving the right to change any of the policies “at any given time.”

Many of the RVs on site had to be towed in over the course of several days due to being in disrepair. Once brought to the site, guests are not allowed to repair the vehicle in their parking space. This results in many RVs and cars that are falling apart, with no opportunity to restore mobility.

Despite the enforcement of rules, theft still does occur within the safe site. One guest of the site, Randall, 65, had his bike stolen from in front of his trailer. He was the first guest to arrive at the site on October 4th. “I thought [the safe site] would be more secure than it is,” said Randall. “I’m tired of being robbed.” Randall has had a total of five bikes stolen from him, the most recent of which valued at \$800.

Guests of the community expressed gratitude and appreciation towards staff, saying that the workers from SVDP have been nothing but helpful but with only two paid employees and no active casework it is doubtful the site will prosper.



October 22, 2021
By: J. Ellis

1. Disarm, defund, and abolish the University of Oregon Police Department.
2. Democratize the board of trustees by holding public and democratic elections for all appointees. Appoint community members, not capitalists!
3. Divest from fossil fuels and discontinue reliance on prison labor.

Other organizations emphasized the impact that the university has on the quality of life not only on campus, but in Eugene-Springfield at large. Eugene Community Fridge, for example, explained in an impassioned speech how food justice is environmental and economic justice, suggesting ways the University can better mitigate

Broadly, all of the speeches were intended to spread awareness about the involved groups and the demands they have for the university. Representatives for participating groups rose to the occasion, urging the university to substantially address an array of social justice issues: from the flaws of for-profit public universities to the rallying cry, "cops off campus, cops off earth!"

Continued on page 15...



**Stop the
Flat Country
Timber Sale**

**Our Occupation is
over but our fight
is just beginning**

Cascadia Forest Defenders
is fighting the proposed
Flat Country old growth
timber sale in the so-called
"Willamette National
Forest", on stolen Kalapuya
and Molalla land. We are
calling on the Forest
Service to drop the sale, in
order to protect our
climate, our communities
and our drinking water.

**How you
can help:**

Call Senator Wyden
and tell him to publicly
oppose the sale.

Climate leaders don't
support old growth and
mature forest logging.

(541)431-0229

LABOR & ORGANIZING

There is Power in A Union: A Case for the Unionization of University Housing

By: Miles Slayton

Friends, Comrades, and my fellow University Housing workers! Today presents us with a unique opportunity, one which we would be unwise to let pass by. The forces of capital— momentarily thrown out of lockstep due to the global pandemic— have found themselves struggling to rehire those employees they lost during the pandemic. Desperate signs plaster every storefront, and yet no one is taking them up on their offer. We have a historic chance to advance our cause! We cannot afford to miss this chance, so listen, and listen well, that you may understand the opportunity presented before us today.

For centuries, the forces of Capital have lurched forward, indiscriminately consuming all that it can reach to fuel it's hungering fires. However, these past two years have given pause to this inferno. COVID-19, for all the pain and death that it has caused, interrupted the ever-constant march and made it stumble; if only briefly. While the world has been slowly crawling back into "normalcy" following the peak of the pandemic, something unusual occurred: The inexhaustible supply of bodies which Capital depended on has exhausted itself. People are not returning to work. This is hardly news; the employment crisis has continued on for a couple of months now. This could provide an opportunity to bring change— a chance to build a union for our workplace. Now, this is more easily said than done, but what is so important is that right now it CAN be done! For an example of how we could even achieve in our workplaces, look no further than the PNW Public Market and its owners: University Housing.

I work at the PNW Public Market, in Unthank hall. These establishments are all crewed by employees of University Housing: a semi-independent company who operates purely off the profits they generate. For all intents and purposes, University Housing is a private corporation. Student Employees who work in these establishments are paid just one dollar above the minimum wage— \$13.75 an hour— and receive 10 days off per year for holidays, in addition to a small number of accrued vacation days. These conditions are common throughout much of the fast food industry, whose awful treatment of their employees is infamous.

The difficulty that University Housing (and many other establishments) has had getting people to return to work is our opportunity. Not only is every place where the company operates decorated with "we're hiring" signs, and they have even begun to give out paltry cash incentives to current employees who manage to

push others into getting hired. This is not an environment in which an organized union of workers can simply be fired or scabbed out of existence. So long as the employment crisis continues, we will have the advantage, and thus may work to create a Restaurant Workers Union.

The formation of a Restaurant Workers Union, so long as it remains egalitarian in practice and anticapitalist in principle, will allow for us to drastically improve the conditions under which we labor. An organization which allows any one of us to sit down at a bargaining table with the bosses and know that they have everyone at their back. We would be able to advocate for change without fear of being fired or laughed off. To our bosses, a single worker leaving is unfortunate but solvable. We can— as has occurred throughout this employment crisis— leave and refuse to come back unless our working conditions improve. This is the organizational power of a union: to be able to advocate for fundamental changes in our relationship with the owning class.

It is imperative that we act to improve our working conditions, not only for our own sakes, but for the sake of our fellow University Housing employees. A wage of \$13.75 is not enough to support oneself under normal conditions, not even accounting for the massive financial burden of college living. All our pay does is provide a paper thin cushion which only provides the illusion of financial security. In addition, such poor wages do not provide any incentive for people to return to work. Why lose a good chunk of your week to wage labor which provides little in return? The bosses may attempt any number of schemes to try and get people to work, but without serious evidence that our jobs are any better than the alternatives, there is simply no reason for people to seek employment. Unionization, and the advancement of working conditions which it enables, can provide incentives to people who would otherwise write off this job as "just another fast food gig." In addition, it will ensure that those of us who already work for University Housing can be sure that their work is both comfortable and well compensated.

The benefits of unionization are clear, and it would be wise of us to seize this historic opportunity. We need to take the steps necessary to ensure the realization of worker's rights, because if we don't, who will?



McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center Strike

This article is adapted from a previous post by the author at Solidarity News, Matthew O-G

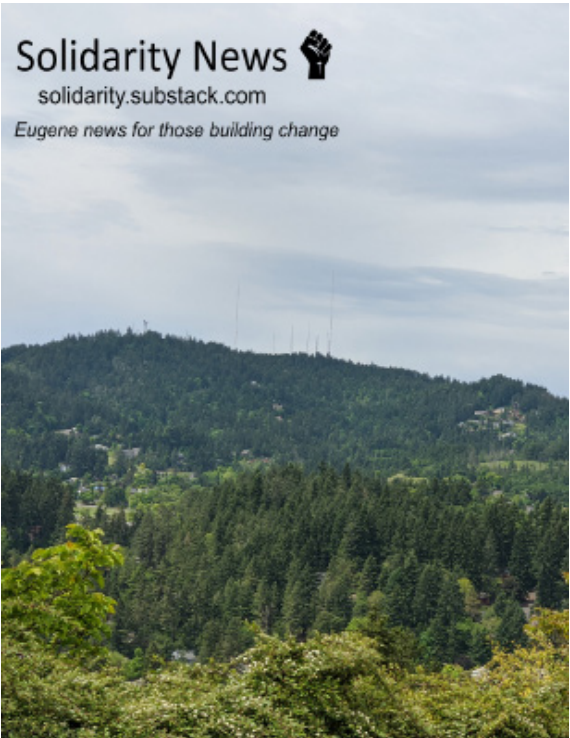
Workers at McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center in Springfield, represented by SEIU 49, went on a two day strike starting the morning of Tuesday, October 5. CNAs, dieticians, housekeeping staff, and more struck for fair wages, affordable healthcare, and to stop outsourcing labor. The union is set to return to the bargaining table Tuesday, and if they do not receive an adequate offer from management, they could strike again.

Gypsy Smith is a housekeeper at McKenzie-Willamette and is among one of the 100 workers whose jobs are set to be outsourced on October 24. Smith started her job at the beginning of the pandemic, but says she also knows co-workers who have worked at the hospital for several decades that are facing outsourcing. "People who devoted their lives and risked [their] lives are being betrayed," Smith said, "[McKenzie-Willamette] just betrayed us, discarded us, and people are being forgotten."

In addition to the threat of outsourcing, all members of the 400 worker bargaining unit are fighting a 27% raise to healthcare costs over the next three years. Workers are also seeking competitive wages from their company that received \$4.5M in CARES act funds.

Many community members came to support including allied unions and politicians. Members of GTFF, SEIU 503, ATU, ONA, Roofers, UFCW 555, AFSCME, OSEA, OFNHP, and SEA showed their support on the picket line. John Gangl, who works for LTD and is also the recording secretary of ATU 757, remembers when the healthcare workers had his union's back and finds it important to stand up for these workers now in their time of need.

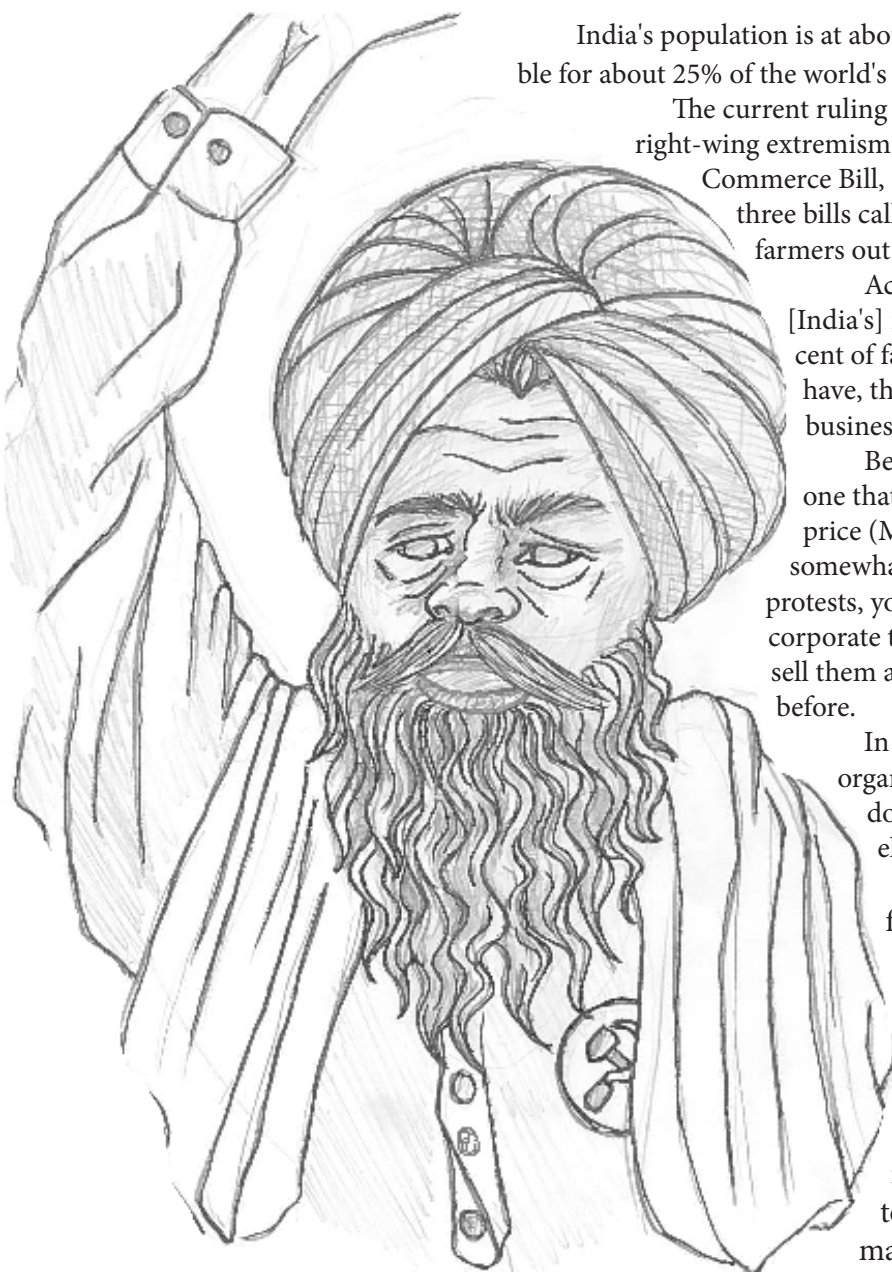
Workers met Thursday morning before walking in together at McKenzie-Willamette. While the strike has ended, the struggle for job security and a fair contract continues. Union leaders speculate that if management does not give an adequate offer at the bargaining table, workers could go on strike again.



Solidarity News 
solidarity.substack.com
Eugene news for those building change

Solidarity with International Workers: India

By: banzai



India's population is at about 1.38 billion people, with over 115 million of them being farmers. India is responsible for about 25% of the world's produce, with the main crops being wheat, rice, sugarcane, and numerous spices.

The current ruling party in India is the BJP, or the Bharatiya Janata Party, whose ideas revolve around right-wing extremism. A little over a year ago, they passed the 3 farm bills: The Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce Bill, Farmers Agreement of Price Assurance Bill, and the Essential Commodities Bill. These three bills call for the privatization and push for corporate farming in India, putting millions of local farmers out of work or leaving them to be exploited by the farming industry.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN, "70 percent of [India's] rural households still depend primarily on agriculture for their livelihood, with 82 percent of farmers being small and marginal." With the little money and little legal support they have, these local farmers are easily ending up into the exploitative claws of private landowners, businessmen, and corporations.

Before the three bills were passed, the existing agricultural system was similar to the one that existed in the USSR in the mid-1900s. Farmers were insured a minimum support price (MSP) for the crops they produced, allowing food security for the nation as well as a somewhat stable source of income for the farmers. Due to this, when you see pictures of these protests, you often see the farmers holding red flags with a hammer and sickle in hand. With a corporate takeover, corporations would end up buying the farmers' produce at cheap prices and sell them at unreasonably high prices, making the financial situation for the farmer worse than before.

In retaliation, for the past several months, labor unions and farmers in general have organized strikes and protests. Luckily, the farmers have received a lot of media coverage—domestically and internationally— the BJP, especially considering the next presidential election is around the corner.

During the week of the 18th of October, the SKM (a coalition of 40 Indian farmer unions), led a massive protest. The protest, “Rail Roko” (which means stop the railway in Hindi), was calling for the repeal of the three farming bills. Thousands of farmers sat on the railway tracks, halting over 200 trains and affecting over 100 locations.

is this affecting us though (in the US)? India is the lead exporter of pepper cardamom, turmeric, and so many other spices. They're also the lead producer of cotton, meaning most of the cotton clothes you wear are produced by an Indian farmer. This is an issue that affects your pantries, as well as your closets. It's important for us to keep ourselves updated on international labor rights issues and movements to make sure we support the backbone of our society: farmers.

UO Dining “Staffing Shortage” Reflects Poor Wages

By: Azzi Lescio

Visit any dining hall on campus this fall and you're liable to find a sign proclaiming decreased hours, slashed services, missing menu items or temporary closures---all “due to a staffing shortage.” This is certainly disappointing for many students who enjoy certain dishes or like to get a late night snack, but it's also revealing of a bigger problem with the way University Dining is framing this issue and their relationship to the campus community generally; a problem that (like so many) has its roots in capitalism.

UO Dining primarily profits not by selling individual meals, but by selling meal plans. These guarantee access to specific amounts of food across the halls for a set rate, are typically purchased at the start of the term, and are generally required for students living on campus. These factors mean that most students are accessing dining halls as their primary food source, and are not at liberty to change that.

As such, UO is under an obligation to provide the services, including full hours and consistent quality options for diverse diets, that were promised when students bought their meal plans. They seem to be aware of at least this much--thus, the apologetic signs. However, what they're missing, or else refusing to acknowledge, is that their “staffing shortage” is their fault.

UO Dining seems very intent on shifting the blame for being short staffed to the myriad students choosing not to work there. “We're hiring!”, their signs proclaim, “Ask your server for a card with the handshake link.” They're even offering “up to \$250 in incentives” for new hires who stay until December. So why doesn't anyone want to work, they seem to be wondering.

Well, what their signs don't say is that their starting wage is a measly \$13.25 an hour---barely over minimum wage. And the job posting doesn't say anything about a raise anytime soon. The benefits listed on Handshake are a discounted meal---not even free, discounted---each day of work and the practically insulting vaguery “opportunity for advancement and development.” Advancement to where, I wonder? Development of what?

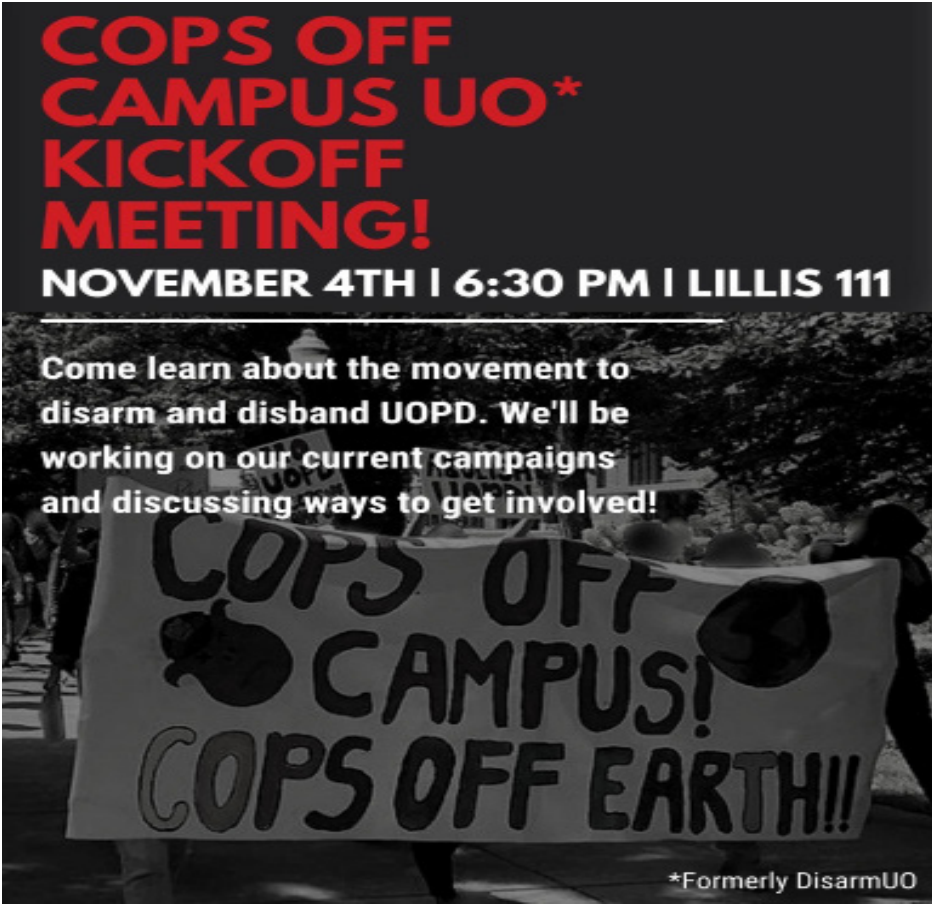
What UO Dining must understand is what anyone who's taken an economics class can tell them: \$13.25 isn't enough for the labor they're trying to purchase. How can we tell? Simple---people aren't filling the positions. To fill these roles---which they are obliged to do because they've already agreed to offer these services---UO Dining has to be competitive, and these wages are laughably uncompetitive. In today's labor environment, you simply cannot get away with paying that close to minimum wage for that kind of work, especially with no benefits to speak of.

This is far from the only case of businesses crying “nobody wants to work”, and every time, it's because they pay shit wages and are shitty to work for. UO Dining shouldn't be apologizing for being short staffed. They should be boosting

their wages, expanding their benefits and improving their work environments (including covid safety), to recruit, retain and fairly treat enough employees to actually provide the services students have paid for.

Unfortunately, history shows us that they won't likely do this of their own accord. If they can get away with just cutting back on services permanently while charging increasingly more each year, they will do so. And complaining in Student Insurgent op-eds won't do much, so what's a student worker to do? Rhetorical question, of course: the answer is STRIKE!

An organized coalition of campus dining workers going on strike for a single day could almost certainly raise wages by a few dollars at least, and a week could secure almost any benefits the university could offer. We should ignore anti-unionization rules and rhetoric, and look to the wider labor movement sweeping the country for comradeship. If UO Dining won't compensate us fairly for our labor, why should we let them take it?



IATSE’s Fight to Improve Wages and Working Conditions for Crews in Tinseltown

By: David Patrick Schranck, Jr.

For the first time in the International Alliance of Theatrical and Stage Employees (IATSE) union’s 128 year history, 60,000 workers represented by the union came close to striking over grueling working conditions and inadequate pay. The union represents most of the film and television industry’s behind the scenes workers.

The union members authorized a strike with 89.66% turnout and 98.68% of those who cast ballots voting yes. The strike authorization vote came after negotiations with the organization representing the studios’ producers, the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP), broke down in September 2021. The COVID pandemic, like with many other unions, has caused rank and file members of IATSE to reconsider their working conditions and demand better for themselves. Many workers shared their experiences on an Instagram account called @ia_stories. They’ve described working shifts as long as 14-18 hours, having very little time off, accidentally dozing off while driving home due to lack of sleep, short turnaround times between shifts, being forced to work through their lunch breaks, being paid low wages, and wage theft. In an industry that’s reliant on networking and relationship building, many workers were previously afraid to share their concerns about working conditions for fear of retaliation.

In the eleventh hour, IATSE began to finalize an agreement with the AMPTP to avoid a strike. The union is encouraging a yes vote on the agreement. But, many members feel that the proposed compromise agreement is insufficient, with some committing to vote no. The current tentative agreement would institute 54-hour weekends, 10-hour turnarounds between shifts, 3% annual raises, and increased penalties for missed meal breaks. Voting for the agreement is expected to begin soon, whether or not it will be approved by the rank and file is still up in the air.

Amidst these circumstances, Alec Baldwin accidentally shot and killed a cinematographer, Halyna Hutchins, and injured the director, Joel Souza, on the set of an independent film called Rust on October 21st. Hours before, unionized camera crew workers walked off the set due to poor working conditions. The crew was forced to work long shifts, had to drive an hour to hotels or stay in run-down motels closer to the set, and were not receiving pay. Additionally, they had also raised concerns about the safety of the prop guns used for filming prior to the fatal shooting. The assistant director on the film, Dave Halls, had previously been fired from the production of a different film called Freedom’s Path in 2019 over prop gun

safety issues.

The issues raised regarding the production of Rust underscore the concerns that IATSE members have been raising in the lead up to their potential strike. Overhauls in working conditions for film crews are long overdue and this tragedy makes that clearer than ever. As one of the most unionized industries in the nation, workers in film and television production wield immense power and influence that has previously been untapped. These workers should not have to devote their whole lives to their jobs and risk their safety to make a living. We can only hope that the IATSE rank and file will vote down their tentative agreement with the AMPTP so that they can achieve the substantive, lasting change in the film and TV industry that they desperately need and deserve.



UO Young Democratic Socialists of America
Meeting every Wednesday at 7pm

@

McKenzie 240c

Follow us on Twitter and Instagram @UOYDSA

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Vivian Day Care Center Responds to Staff COVID Safety Concerns

Teachers at the Vivian Olum Child Development Center were awarded a pay-raise and shorter work hours after weeks-long negotiations with administrative staff at the Center and UO Campus Services administration. The change comes after the refusal to acknowledge long-held complaints regarding work conditions at the center. Vivian is described on their website as “providing a comprehensive year-round child care and development program serving University faculty and staff families.” Taking in around 80-90 children from “eight weeks to fifth grade,” Vivian employs around 20 teachers and 20 UO student helpers.

Trouble began at the end of last summer. UO had announced a return to full-capacity operations in spring term and with the rise of the Delta variant, teachers at Vivian raised numerous concerns to the directors of the center in hopes of seeking safe and responsible work conditions. Along with the demand to return to full-capacity came an imposition by administrators for mandatory overtime to an already overworked and understaffed group of teachers. The primary concerns regarding COVID and child safety would be exacerbated by the changes demanded by administration. The expansion from smaller cohorts composed of only a few children to full-sized classrooms with a capacity for 10-20 children is an egregious decision that entirely disregards the impending arrival of the Delta variant. Maintaining social distancing under these new changes was simply out of the question.

Additionally, as a result of staffing shortages, teachers at Vivian found the situation extremely strained as they sought to balance their responsibilities as educators with the upkeep of regulatory sanitizing practices and their overall caregiving responsibilities to these children. From the teachers’ perspective, returning to full-capacity with no additional support for the staff would not allow for the proper application of workplace protocols required to enforce precautionary COVID measures. An open letter written by employees for the directors of Vivian was met with a lukewarm response as they stated they had ‘done everything they could’ in conversation with

UO administration to express the concerns of the teachers—a paltry response when one considers the decision to return to full-capacity was reached several months before.

The directors, however, agreed to schedule a meeting with Kassy Fisher, the Associate Vice President for Campus Services and newly-selected “associate vice president and chief of staff for the Office of the Provost.” Fisher is described as a “thoughtful leader and problem-solver who values strategy and collaboration” ; according to Patrick Phillips’ announcement for her selection. The workers at Vivian would offer a slightly different interpretation of her character following their meeting.

When teachers expressed the negative effect a switch to full capacity operations would have on their already strained physical and mental health—while also trying to maintain their responsibility as educators and upholding safe COVID precautions amidst a staff shortage—they only received the perfunctory empathy from Fisher. Fisher even recalled her past experience of working with school-age children in a failed attempt to relate to the employees and offered her week reassurance for what the teachers knew would be unsafe work conditions. Employees continuously refused the call to work mandatory overtime as the economic and personal stress of the pandemic would not allow them to spend any more time at work. When teachers raised their opinion that small cohorts were the reason there had been no outbreaks so far, Fisher fell back on the argument that Vivian’s adherence to ‘state regulations’ would be enough. This simply did not align with actual concerns of employees and there was no agreement with her opinion that state regulations could be sufficient to protect the employees and children at the center. When one of the teachers raised the point that the EMU childcare facility advertises itself as holding itself to higher standards than state regulations and this change in Vivian policy was contradictory to its advertised image, Kassy stated outright that no matter the possible health precautions, the Delta variant would come into the center.

In a meeting filled with emotion, tears, and

heartfelt testimony by a staff concerned with the safety of the children and their capacity to fulfill their role as educators, Kassy’s response was an act of extreme disrespect and disregard for the workers who were actually working with the children on a day-to-day basis. One would imagine that a meeting concerning Vivian policy would allow for teachers to shape future operations at Vivian, instead, they were left with Fisher’s final statement that the ‘UO has moved on from the pandemic.’The unsafe conditions at Vivian posed a greater risk to campus, since the infection of faculty’s children would have the potential for campus-wide implications.

Soon enough, Vivian reported a case of COVID in early October that forced a classroom to close for two weeks. Contract-tracing has become difficult, since the removal of smaller cohorts has forced employees to move between classrooms instead of containing employees to specific classrooms. No further infections were reported, but parents thereafter expressed concern for the maintaining safe COVID protocols. Two employees have left Vivian and another has been fired for what other employees saw as retaliation for speaking to parents about work conditions at the center. Many other teachers have expressed a desire to look for a new job.

Just last week, Vivian announced that shorter work hours and an increase in pay for lead teachers, leaving substitute and temporary workers out of the conversation. This small benefit does not take away the immense disrespect felt by the workers in the meeting held by Fisher and does help in improving the overall working conditions at Vivian. However, this story is a lesson in what can be accomplished when employees work together in effort to garner respect and dignity for their work. Yet, in the end, we are left with the common sentiment felt across the university wherein students, faculty, and workers alike are left to fend for themselves in the midst of a global pandemic. We should focus on supporting our workers and listening to those on the front lines of this pandemic. How will we prioritize our safety when decisions continue to be made by those on administrative boards with no real experience with the reality at hand?



POOLS OF SORROW

Art By: Avery Massengale, noconceptart.org

"Someday emerging at last from the violent insight, let me sing out jubilation and praise to assenting angels. Let not one clearly-struck hammers of my heart fail to sound because of a slack, a doubtful, or broken string.

Let my joyfully streaming face make me more radiant; let my hidden weeping arise and blossom. How dear you will be to me then, you nights of anguish.

Why didn't I kneel more deeply to accept you, inconsolable sisters, and surrendering, lose myself in your loosened hair. How we squander our hours of pain. How we gaze beyond them into the bitter duration to see if they have an end.

Though they are really our winter enduring foliage, our season in our inner year- not only a season in time -but our place and settlement, foundation and soil and home."

-Rainer Maria Rilke, Book of Hours

No GODS, No MASTERS: No JAILS, No JAILERS

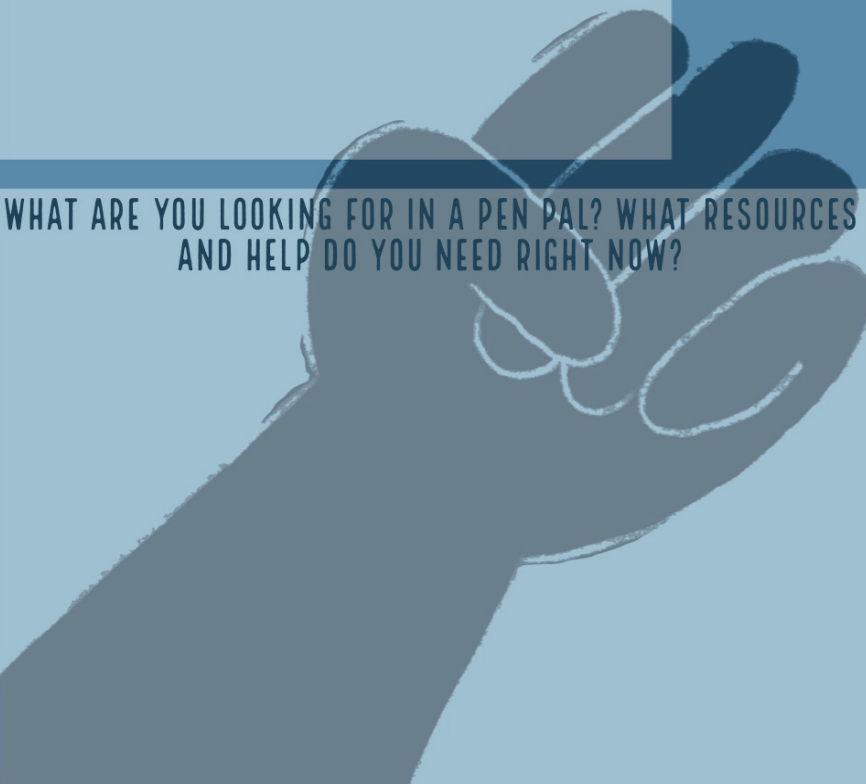
PEN PAL UPDATES:

We at the Insurgent want to help you get the resources you need! We hope that starting with a conversation is the best way to do so. Below we have a signup tear-out for our incarcerated readers. If you are interested in getting connected and starting a conversation please do not hesitate to fill out your information and we will get you connected with a reader who will keep the conversation going!

PRISONER PEN PAL SIGN-UP

CURRENT MAILING ADDRESS:

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR IN A PEN PAL? WHAT RESOURCES AND HELP DO YOU NEED RIGHT NOW?



WRITING PROMPTS

1) What is the reality of COVID-19 inside prison walls? Are you seeing less or more care being taken by the facility as a whole? If you know, what has it been like for your family and friends trying to get in contact with you? How are you feeling about the vaccines? What -if any- information have you found out or heard about Covid? Finally what are two immediate changes you feel could help you right now?

2) What are some daily injustices you are currently facing behind prison walls? If you're feeling it, write us a daily check-in log and we will give your voice the a spotlight!

3) What are some crazy stories you've been dying to share? Have a story of that one wild night out? Grab a pen and get to writing, we want to hear it all!

We will be accepting any and all submissions from as many prisons/ jails we can reach. Don't fret if you feel the prompts are not for you. We still want to see your poems artwork and writings alike! Submissions of all word counts are always welcome

Penpal Sign up

First & Last name:

Email:

Introduction letter. Write a letter telling a bit about you and why you want to become a penpal:

CONTENT WARNING:

This story discusses issues involving sexual and physical assault of a child and other topics that may be triggering to some readers. Viewer discretion is advised.

Shelly Hart's Early Life:

By: Angitia

In July of this past summer, I was able to connect with Shelly through a mutual friend. Shelly Hart is an ex-prisoner and addict who has spent over 18 years of her life incarcerated. I had mentioned that I work for the Insurgent's Prison Project and told her I was interested in learning about her experiences with the prison system, the failure of the system to better our society, and specifically how the system has failed her. Now in her early 40's, Shelly has taken the time to sit down and take a deep dive into her past: starting from her earliest memories, to where she's at today.

Shelly offers these words for our readers:

I want to let women know they don't have to be ashamed. You don't have to hide it and you're not marked for life. You can overcome it- I got out, got off parole, and am clean. It doesn't have to be your secret, there are people who care. If this helps one girl or boy feel better about themselves - to one day be able to look at themselves in the mirror again. To not turn to drugs or prostitution. Somewhere down the road you can remember this story and say fuck this I'm not gonna go to prison. You can make it to the other side, it's easier said than done, believe me, but I did it and work everyday to keep it. I debated if this was the right time and place to tell my story and have come to the decision that I cannot and will not hold onto this any longer. There is nothing stronger than women helping women.

We met at a diner over on West 11th and sat down in a booth towards the back of the restaurant. We both knew the conversation we were about to enter was a little too deep to begin casually next to the family of four sitting in the middle of the restaurant. As Shelly sat across from me I could feel the energy at the table start to set in, a heaviness took hold. I watched Shelly as she ordered a Pepsi, while her teacup chihuahua -cleverly named Misdemeanor- was sitting next to her in a cozy little bag. I looked at the questions I had written down but felt weird about diving into them right away. To my surprise, she was ready to dive in. She asked me what I wanted to hear first, if I was only interested in her time behind bars or if I wanted to know what actually led her there. I chose the latter, of course. I opened the voice memos app on my phone, hit record and we started with her earliest memories...

...In the 1970's Shelly was just 5 years old when her life in Medford abruptly ended. One day, her family home was targeted by a drug raid. The FBI had shown up with shovels and started digging up the entire yard. They had found over 17 kilos of cocaine buried on the property. Shelly witnessed as her father was then arrested along with her uncle in connection with the mafia. Their bail was set at over half a million dollars. Shelly and her little brother went with their mother back to the house as she packed the necessities and loaded up the truck. They had one stop: Mexico.

As Shelly described the raid on her house she spoke fast and stammered a little bit. She had an almost confused look on her face.

As she continued, she prefaced this next period in her life as "The Ugly Part":

A few years before the move to Mexico, when Shelly's baby brother was born, her mom needed a hysterectomy, which is the surgical removal of the uterus. This posed a problem for their new start in Mexico since Shelly's mother wanted to start a new family there and give her new husband a baby.

While Shelly is talking about this time in her life her voice maintains a remarkably still tone. Shelly and I have a brief conversation about how she has had the time and opportunity to work through this trauma in treatment and counseling sessions over these past few years she's been out of prison. Her words staggered a bit. Slightly cringing in her seat, occasionally closing her eyes and shaking her head, she describes what happened to her...

Due to her procedure, Shelly's mother knew she was unable to have a baby herself, so she stood by and participated in a horrific cycle of abuse that was inflicted on Shelly over a ten-year period. Shelly would describe in gruesome detail the events that happened to her: her mother's voice still in her head, "squeeze my hand when it hurts baby, it'll be okay." This was Shelly's reality throughout her childhood, as terrifying as this is to believe. This was something, in time, Shelly would be able to overcome. The details of these events underline the intense manipulation that accompanies chronic child abuse.

I sat almost frozen in the booth as she told her story, my drink untouched. The few times I was able to meet my eyes with Shelly's, my heart panged with emotion. Unable to even think to ask the questions I had originally come with, I just continued to listen for the next ninety minutes...

Tragically, the abuse didn't stop there. While her stepfather was out of the house his cousins would come over and Shelly's mother would offer her to the men. There were times when people would notice something was off with Shelly, but her mom would instinctively take control of the narrative and explain how her daughter was probably "fucking the whole neighborhood." Shelly's mom would even go as far as to accuse her child of sleeping with other women's husbands to distract from what was really happening.

Shelly, seemingly unfazed, took a breath and a bite of the fries we had ordered to share. Keeping the fast-paced and staggered words she started with, I leaned in...

...Shelly had her first baby when she was only 11 years old. She was out working in the fields with her aunt when she felt terrible cramps and she said, candidly, it felt as though she had pooped herself. Shelly told her auntie and she proceeded to grab a sleeping bag, put it in the trunk of a car and have Shelly climb in. Shelly recounts how her aunt helped her deliver the baby and laid it on her tummy. She remembers the baby being white with a mucousy film all over it. Then her aunt did something, Shelly is unsure what happened next, but thereafter her baby slowly turned a pale blue. When she cut the umbilical cord the baby died. Shelly was only 5 or 6 months pregnant at the time so the baby was a tiny thing—its mother a child herself.

Every person who was supposed to protect her failed. One after another, Shelly endured various traumatic events and periods in her life. The people who saw her in pain and chose to do nothing or be compliant to her suffering.

Shelly took another breath and continued on...

Soon after her first birth, Shelly fell pregnant once again by her stepfather; but this baby she carried to term. When Shelly went into labor this time, her mother took her to the hospital where they performed a cesarean section since she was so young. After the c-section, Shelly had to stay in the hospital for three days to be observed. But on the first day, as soon as the doctors took the baby out of the room, Shelly recalls how her mother took the baby and went home, leaving her daughter alone at the hospital for the remaining days.

Shelly's tone shifted as well as the expression on her face. She was reliving that moment for a second time and the anger came back all too easy. Still, maintaining a low voice, she proceeded...

When Shelly was finally discharged, she remembers calling her mom to have her come pick her up, but the response she received was cold. Her mother told her that she would have to walk home, that the exercise would do her good. Right after giving birth, Shelly was forced to walk five miles home. When she finally made it back her mother said to her, "on no uncertain terms: you are not allowed to look at that baby, talk to that baby, look in the direction of that baby- That is my baby and you better understand and understand good that is not your baby."

The waitress walked over at this moment and asked if we needed anything. Shelly was so funny the way she looked at the waitress and said with some sass "thank you we're not interested, mmhmm, yeah, ok yeah, thank you bye now" looked at me and laughed. She slipped back into the two-word spurts...

Throughout Shelly's childhood her mother was addicted to cocaine. One day her mother overdosed, found in the bathroom screaming, "Go get your aunt! Go get your aunt!" and Shelly did just that. Once her aunt realized what was happening, she told Shelly to take the baby and go hide in the other room.

Shelly just stood there for a minute.

Her aunt told her again,

Shelly, take the baby into the other room!

She told her auntie that she wasn't allowed to touch the baby, her aunt looked at her and said: "I am telling you now it's going to be okay, take the baby and hide." So Shelly did as she was told, took the baby into her room and hid in the very back of the closet. It was the first time Shelly was able to really hold and look at the baby girl. The baby girl wrapped her little hand around Shelly's finger, smelling like "little baby burp throw up." She was so cute and sweet, and Shelly dozed off while gazing down at her. The next thing she knew she was awoken by being dragged out of the closet by her hair- things got ugly.

Her mom told her aunt, "you better get this little whore out of here before I kill her." Her aunt came and got her and she stayed at her aunt's house for two weeks until her mom demanded she come home. When she did return home the baby was gone. No baby clothes, crib, anything that could have been the baby's was gone. No one even mentioned that the baby was ever there.

Years later she found out that her mother -afraid that Shelly had bonded with the baby- thought that she was going to run away with the baby and her husband, Shelly's step-father. Shelly's mom got high and smothered the baby with a pillow. Shelly says she has never fully come to terms with that event and didn't find out about the incident until years later...

When Shelly was back at home the cycle of abuse continued and, not after long, she started missing her periods. Shelly was once again pregnant.

This is just the first part of the longer story of Shelly's journey as a woman trapped within the prison industrial complex. Her childhood and the abuse she experienced set her on a path of addiction that ultimately led to her imprisonment. Shelly has been through so much counseling and treatment that she is able to talk about this with us today and be honest about herself in a way that many cannot begin to fathom. The Insurgent is indebted to Shelly's strength in offering to share her story. From this, we can learn about different pathways to prison and begin to think about what we can do differently to avoid others from enduring a similar fate.

By: Robert McCracken

OLD-TIMER

They Locked Me Up At Twenty-One
And Then They Set Me Free At Sixty-Three
All Of The Things That I Have Seen And Done
They Still Haunt Me In My Dreams.
All Of Those Years In Prison,
I Couldn't Begin To Tell You How It Feels;
Of The Pain That Comes With Living,
And Of The Death Which Holds No Fear.
Even, If Now, He Were To Visit
I Know I Would Not Shed A Tear
Because They Locked Me Up At Twenty-One,
And Set Me Free At Sixty-Three,
But Everyone I've Loved Is Gone
And Now It's Only Me.

Pillars of Clay

Brother Forgive Me,
I Find No Pleasure In What I Must Do.
No Joy, No Pride.
No Honor.
Though The Deed That You've Willed
Will Never Be,
The Intent Forever Will.
Now The Blood Of A Brother
Must Be Split
On The Iron Foundation
Of What We Have Built.
Though It Is Not For Us To Say Whose,
It Would Seem That
With The Words Of A Coward,
And The Heart Of A Soldier,
That It Is You Whom Fate Has Chosen
To Mark As Her Own.



Billet-Doux

Poetry—My Love Forbidden—
I Fear You Lost
Where Once Were Hidden,
In This Maze
Of My Creation
Yet To Be;
If I Am Never To Find
You Amidst
What Was And Will Be,
Then I Can Promise You This,
Or May I Never Be Free:
That I Will Love You Forever
Though You May Never Love Me.

Lost Lives

Anger And Arrogance
Hidden
Behind A Mask Of Pride
And Principle.

Life And Death
Weighed
On The Scales Of One Man
And His Emotions.

One Man
Forgotten
To All But Those Who Carry
The Scars Of His Pain.



The Folly Of Vengeance

From Wisdom Himself I Have Heard
My Own Thought Turnt To Word.
Quickly, Lest I Forget,
With This Pen, I Preserve,
A Gem—Of Whose Price
Was No Less Than A Life,
And From He Who Had Paid It,
'Tis To I That He Gave It.
“Friend,” He Said,
With His Last Breath.
“There Is No Revenge...,” He Said.
“There Is No Revenge In Death.”
Now, I May Be A Fool,
For He Did Not Tell Me Why,
But Surely, I Thought,
We Are Of A Like-Mind.
Thus, The Reasoning Of I
Must Be The Same As Of Thy.
That Reasoning, Of Course,
Is That All Men Must Die.

Today

It Is Just Past Noon
Yet Already The Mood
Is High Up In The Sky;
She Said To The Sun,
“I Just Thought I'd Come
Stop By And Say Hi.”

Justice for Jerrin Hickman


Imagine your loved one leaving for work on December 8th, 2008 and not being allowed to return home! This is the nightmare me and my family have been forced to live with and face ever since. He should have never been accused, arrested, taken to trial or convicted. He was misidentified in a case that was only based on circumstantial evidence, the only evidence that applied to him was being there...not his gun, not his fingerprint, not his fight. He was there and misidentified by two young white women who said, "All black men look the same," that is all it took: an accusation and being mistaken for someone else. Guilty verdict: December 2009. Sent to prison: January 2010. It took several more years for us to win in direct-appeal in March 2013. He should have come home, right? No, the state has continued to keep him in prison with full knowledge that it was a wrongful conviction, the wrong person! The state continues to hold him rather than admit there has been a gross miscarriage of justice. I can't tell you how much this has cost me and my family in lost time and money trying to fight for his release and life. Imagine trying to hire/retain/pay attorneys for more than 13 years! That is what my grandmother has had to do for all these years. She is now a retired senior citizen living on a pension and social security. I have spent more than half my life waiting for him to come home... my little brother has been waiting his entire life! My dad has done everything he can do from prison; me and my family continue to do all we can from the outside. We need your assistance and your donations in order to keep paying for his legal fees. Please donate to our fund and help us get him home!

Donate at: <https://gofund.me/921e4419>

Venmo: Imani-Wolery

Robert McCracken Poem Series Write-Up:

Here I present Robert McCracken's series of 6 poems. Reflecting on "Today," I imagine Robert the Poet as a being illuminated by the wondrous lights surrounding the cell where he writes. The light—shining now—and streaking slowly into nothingness is dismissed by the moon and sallies out again in new day; to us, mirroring the varying mind of Robert the Poet as creator of pain, vengeance, and age. The same Robert who turns restlessly in his room and puppets his infinite shadows about, exhibits his depth of imagination in the likeness of the evanescent stages belonging to sun and moon. Once light, then shaded, the darkness we finally encounter is colored by the realm of hues composing the soul of the Man.



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ARTS & CULTURE

Review: Squid Game

By: David Patrick Schranck, Jr.

It didn't take long after its release in September 2021 for Squid Game to become one of Netflix's biggest hits in their history. The series has been viewed by more than 142 million households globally in the month since its release, making it Netflix's most watched series of all time. It's the second major achievement for Korean media in recent years after Bong Joon-ho's highly acclaimed film Parasite won four Oscars, including Best Picture and Best Director, and the Palme d'Or. The series has captivated audiences around the globe, likely because many viewers see themselves in the characters and their struggles.

Squid Game is about a competition between 456 contestants who are all in extreme debt and are lured into playing a series of children's games, where any mistake can lead to their death, in hopes of winning the grand prize of \$45.6 billion (more than \$39.1 million USD). Written and directed by South Korean filmmaker Hwang Dong-hyuk, the screenplay was first drafted during a period of financial hardship and languished for nearly ten years before Netflix agreed to produce it in 2018. He described his series, stating, "I wanted to write a story that was an allegory or fable about modern capitalist society, something that depicts an extreme competition, somewhat like the extreme competition of life. But I wanted it to use the kind of characters we've all met in real life."

Over the course of nine episodes, the story draws you in with relatable characters and a fairly simple plot line that provides audiences with a mixture of drama, thrills and chills, and shock and awe. The acting by the ensemble cast is quite captivating, particularly from Lee Jung-jae as Seong Gi-hun/Player 456, Jung Ho-yeon as Kang Sae-byeok/Player 067, and Kim Joo-ryoung as Han Mi-nyeo/Player 212. The production and costume design in the games and players' quarters are filled with bright colors and innocent iconography reminiscent of childhood. These design choices contrast with the brutality of the violence that players experience and engage in as they fight to survive. Additionally, these design choices are a foil to the dark, gritty outside world the players come from and the sophisticated opulence of the game operator/VIP's quarters. Though the narrative can be considered simple in some respects and the design choices reflect the themes of the series in a fairly direct manner, the show is deeper than it may first appear.

Many elements of the plot have more subtle subtextual significance, especially when taking the past several decades of South Korea's history into account. In the wake of World War II after the Allied forces liberated Korea from Japanese occupation, the peninsula was partitioned into two halves. The northern half was administered by the Soviets and the southern half was administered by the United States. There was originally an intention of eventually reuniting the two. However, this never occurred. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea was established in the North and the Republic of Korea was established in the South. Both sides claimed sovereignty over the whole peninsula which led to the Korean War from 1950 to 1953. In the decades since the end of the war, South Korea experienced long periods of rule by brutal, US-backed autocratic military regimes that only officially ended in 1987 with the establishment of the

Sixth Republic, which sought to establish liberal democracy. During this era of oppressive rule, dissenters were often subjected to acts of extreme cruelty by their own government such as the Gwangju Massacre of 1980 (during which as many as two thousand protestors were killed) and the Samchung concentration camp established the same year (where tens of thousands of innocent civilians were subjected to hard labor and violence). Additionally, the nation sought to rapidly increase its economic standing in the decades after World War II and the Korean War during what was called the "Miracle on the Han River." In the push for swift economic development, many average South Koreans were left behind as the wealthy few were able to consolidate their wealth.

Today, household debt in South Korea is more than 100% of the nation's total GDP. The nation led thirty-three OECD nations in poverty among the elderly as of 2019. The characters in the series are victims of these exact circumstances.

As mentioned before, all of the contestants are deeply indebted. The show also portrays the elderly mothers of Seong Gi-hun/Player 456 and Cho Sang-woo/Player 218 having to continue to work despite their old age and declining health. A more recent historical event that the show directly alludes to is the 2009 Ssangyong Motors strike when laid off workers occupied their factory and were violently repressed by strikebreakers. Gi-hun is portrayed as being a participant in the strikes and witnesses one of his coworkers being murdered during a flashback. Many of the workers were unable to find steady work after the strikes and the same is true for Gi-hun. Additionally, the White American male VIPs who bet on which players will live or die during the competition represent how the US government has had an overbearing and negative influence over the nation in the decades since World War II and the Korean War. Abdul Ali/Player 199 represents the underclass of migrant labor in the nation. Kang Sae-byeok/Player 067 is a North Korean defector who struggles to survive with her younger brother and desperately attempts to reunite with her parents who are still in the North. In episode two, despite a slim majority of players voting to end the game, most eventually return after finding the sadistic competition to

be a better alternative than their own sad realities. The message of the show has even resonated so much in South Korea that it has inspired thousands of workers to strike, led by the militant Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU), with many donning costumes of the characters.

This subtextual context deepens the show beyond the simplicity that most audiences see on the surface. But, even without this more in-depth reading of it, the show is quite enthralling and connects with you powerfully on an emotional level. The competitions are quite thrilling and put you on the edge of your seat. The vicious violence the players endure is harrowing, tugging at your heartstrings when important characters are killed off one by one. Squid Game is a series that reflects our turbulent times back to us in a manner that both entertains and compels us to consider our own position within this late-capitalist hell we all live in. I give the show 4.5/5 stars and my highest praise. The hype is real! It is currently streaming on Netflix.



On Fatphobia...

By: Leon Oliver

If you grew up in the age of movies like *The Devil Wears Prada* (2006), (a time when having a “fat ass” was an insult and not a compliment) you might have disordered eating. Many people practice eating disorder behaviors and don’t acknowledge it because it is normalized, diet culture has existed for decades and permeates everything. This particular movie repeatedly humiliates the main character for wearing size 6 jeans. While I sat in front of the TV screen being fat-shamed by classic 2000’s movies, my mom consumed every magazine off the rack about perfect housekeeping, the perfect bikini body, and watching shows like *What Not to Wear* which emphasized not “dressing frumpy” (a media buzzword used for fat people). She was trying to get back to her model body from her 20’s, something that wasn’t sustainable for her, even then. It was always: just lose 10 more pounds, then you can go to Paris!

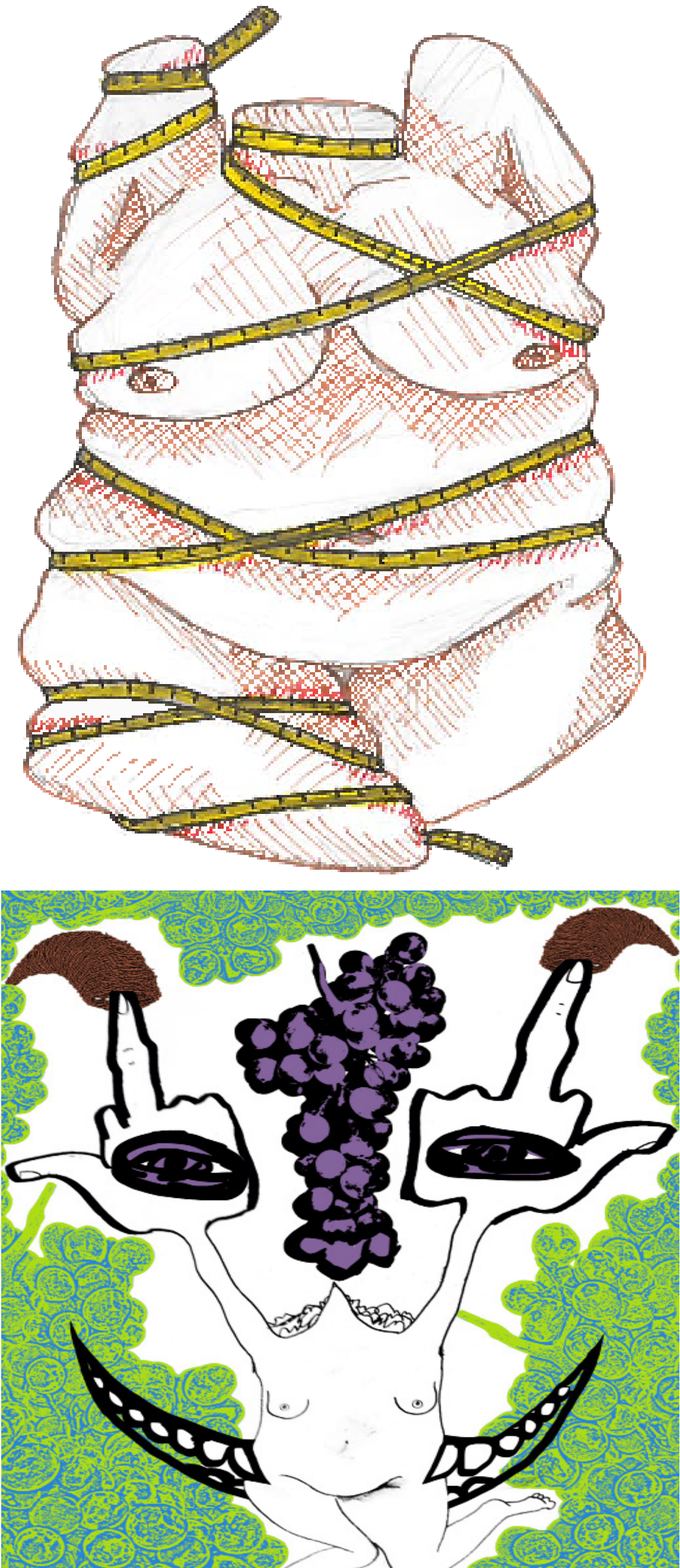
Today, thanks to the body positivity movement, you can be up to a size 16 in jeans before people start raising their eyebrows. The mainstream body positivity movement has expanded the category of being a “normal” weight. You are no longer fat as a size 6, and there are a lot more body norms that we are starting to reject. Standards based on whiteness, thinness, perfectly groomed hair, and not looking “homeless,” are all just ways we establish hierarchy and harm people who do not fit or can not fit manufactured ideals of attractiveness and grooming. For women, these beauty standards are a function of misogyny to keep you small, docile, and wrapped up in others’ expectations of who you should be. For POC, it’s a function of racism that wastes your time trying to conform to an unattainable white standard. The same is true for transphobia and other forms of oppression, which build on one another. As a generation we rightfully recognize that it’s fucked to define your self worth by a beauty standard.

But we haven’t gone far enough. Part of how we console our insecure peers is by saying things like: “you’re not fat! You’re hot” or “you’re not fat, you’re normal.” Both of these statements set fatness up as opposites to being hot or normal. Currently, we make very little effort to separate fatness from other metrics like attractiveness, ability, health, and morality. Thinness is not next to godliness. Health is not a moral imperative. It’s convenient that when discussions about BMI come up, people forget that the BMI scale was designed by

a eugenicist and white supremacist (further reading: “The Bizarre and Racist History of the BMI”- by Medium). For those of us who are POC, trans, have estrogen-dominant bodies, recovering from an eating disorder, food insecure, or fat, having your doctor evaluate and share your BMI is hurting you. Because of institutionalized fatphobia, many doctors will ignore your health issues and deny you care because they think you need to lose weight first, even if weight is not related to the health issue at all. For someone in recovery from orthorexia or other eating disorders, hearing that you are in the overweight or obese category can be massively triggering. Feeling pressure to lose weight, or attempt to, is a form of social control similar to the restrictions on reproductive rights. It’s an infringement of your bodily autonomy. It’s a waste of your energy. It tells you that what other people desire and expect is more important than your peace.

For many low-income children, this food-related oppression starts in grade school. I had to serve other children lunch first before I was allowed to eat my free lunch. That creates a visual distinction between the normal child and the one wearing the hair net. What does this teach children about their worthiness to eat, that they must endure potential humiliation to do it? Skipping meals makes you more likely to be fat later on in life (OSU.edu - In study, skipping meals is linked to abdominal weight gain) and face further oppression. If you’re poor, skipping that meal may be necessary and is rewarded in early childhood because you are saving money for the family. It is also rewarded by more positive remarks on your body. We are setting low-income children up for eating disorders, to start practicing disordered behaviors now and have them worsen and develop as they age.

Rather than trying to lose weight and do the “morally right” thing, question who benefits from your insecurity. If fatphobic people really gave a fuck about your health, the narrative would not be to lose weight, but to rest, eat nutritious foods without restraint, have low stress, and engage in joyful movement. So what does body revolution look like? It looks like eating enough and often. It looks like feeding the people in your community without comments on the amount or their worthiness, and no barriers to food and clothes. It looks like reframing your life around the belief that we are all deserving of basic rights and dignities: the right to nutritious food, clothes that fit, respect for our appearance, bodily autonomy, to educated and accessible healthcare, and the freedom to take up space. How can we focus on reading Marxist theory if we’re hungry?



Child Protective Services: Money Made Stealing Children from Vulnerable Mothers

By: Rosie

Growing up in the US, we are told that if you are not able to have children you can simply adopt a baby, but rarely do we really consider the ethical implications behind infant adoption and how these babies came to be within the privatized adoption system. According to the US adoption network, 140,000 child adoptions take place per year in the United States, with about 10,000-20,000 of those adoptions being privatized infant adoptions and 59% of overall adoptions being from the child welfare system (Foster care and CPS). The amount of infant adoptions that take place in countries where privatized infant adoption is legal (The US, China, and Russia) are astronomically higher than the rest of the world, where privatized infant adoption is illegal and children are only adopted out at toddler age and older (this includes international adoptions by US citizens).

It is extremely rare for a woman with the necessary resources to raise a child to willingly give up her infant for adoption, and the vast majority of birth mothers would have kept their children if they had been given the resources and financial support necessary to do so. We tell women that they have options when it comes to childbirth, however we back them into financial corners and do not provide the resources that these women would need to sustain a child. The privatized infant adoption industry not only sets prices on infants up to \$100,000 (With white children on the more expensive end of the spectrum) but they also keep the majority portions of the adoption fees which has led to the privatized adoption industry having a \$14 billion revenue.

Children who are separated from their parents -especially in infancy- can be affected by this trauma for the rest of their lives, and the same goes for the birth mothers who are often coerced or forced (by CPS) to give up their children. It's a common misconception that women who give up their children simply don't want them, and this argument is commonly used to justify the ethics of adoption, es-

pecially by adoptive parents. However this is almost never the case, the vast majority of women see adoption as their last resort when they do not have the financial or physical means to take care of a child and do not have abortion as an option, meaning that poor women are far more likely to have to give away their children than someone who possesses the privilege of being able to fully financially and physically support a child. The privatized adoption industry capitalizes off of women not being able to financially support their children and instead of offering them the resources they need to be able to keep their child, they sell their children for tens of thousands of dollars to make a profit.

Women are told that their three choices are: abortion, adoption, or raising the child, and when you do not have the financial, physical, or emotional means to support one, those options are narrowed even further. This is also why abortion is such an important issue, because when we take away that option as well, women are only left with one choice: giving away their child to a stranger.

Parents who are struggling to support their children, be it because of financial struggles, abusive situations, substance abuse issues etc. should be given more resources and the help they need to be able to raise their children in a loving and supportive environment; but instead of being offered support, their children are forcibly taken away from them by CPS for at least one year if they are not able to appeal within 14 days.

Foster care is also often an even worse environment, due to the fact that foster parents are paid for the children they care for, giving them financial incentive to participate in a system that aims to separate children from their parents. If the goal of foster care is reunification and rehabilitation for the parents, why do 59% of adoptions occur from the child welfare system?

An estimated 1 million families in the US are seeking to adopt infants, but where do they ex-

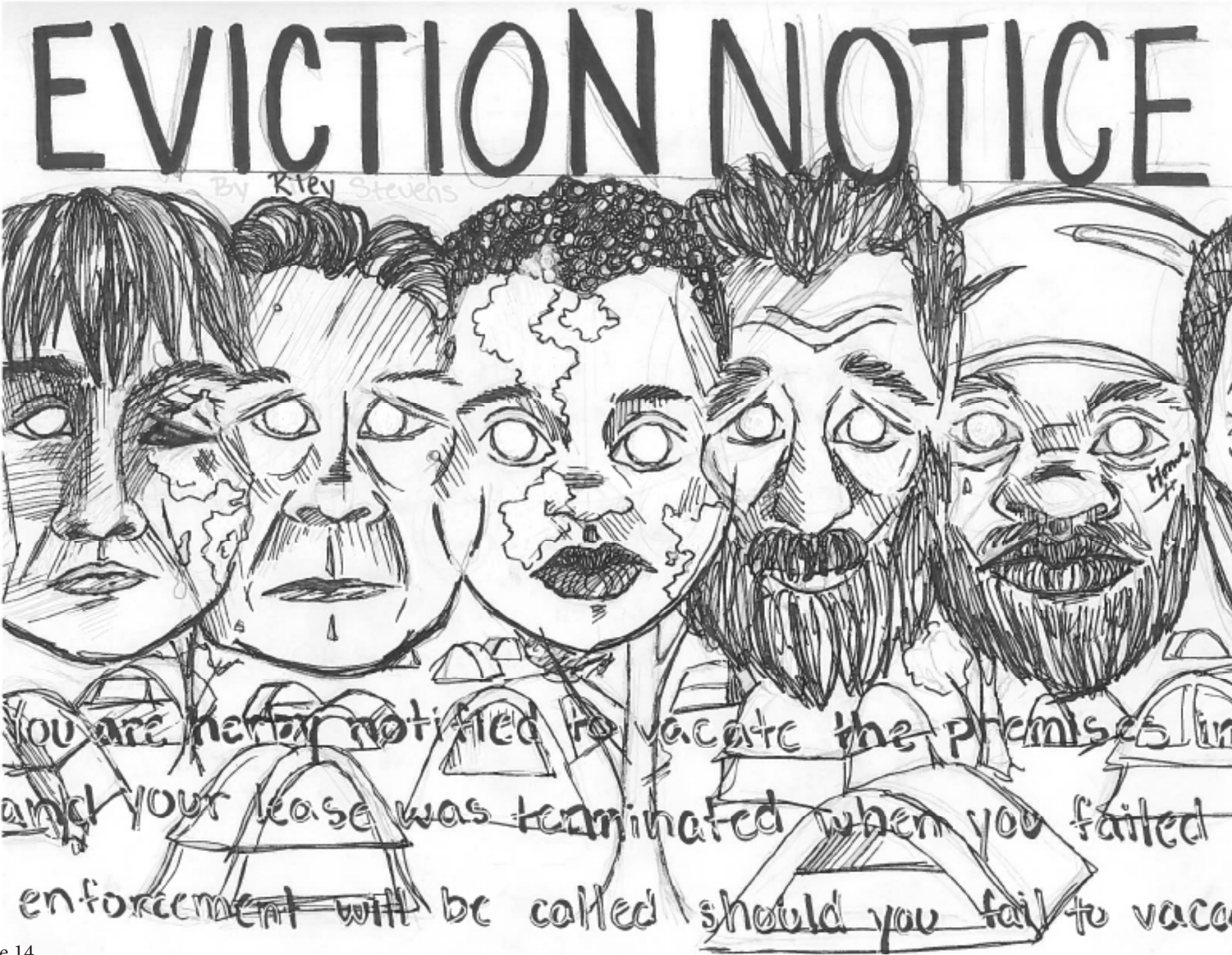
pect these infants to come from? The answer has unfortunately been overwhelmingly poor and black mothers. CPS has extreme issues within their system when it comes to targeting families of certain races. Racial disparities exist at every step of the child welfare system and black children make up 36% of the foster care system despite only being 15% of the child population.

One study found that despite similar rates of substance use between Black and white pregnant women, Black women were 10 times more likely to be reported to child welfare authorities for substance use during pregnancy. The child welfare system, like every other system in the US, racially discriminates and because of this black families have become the targets for CPS supervision, removal of their children, and termination of their parental rights.

A disturbing video recently went viral showing a black woman who is identified as "Ms. Sellers" attempting to leave the hospital with her two day old infant before being intercepted by CPS and multiple police officers in August 2021. Ms. Sellers repeats multiple times throughout the video "I am leaving with my baby, you will not take my baby," disregarding her pleas, the police officer on video violently rips the baby carrier -containing her infant- from her arms while Ms. Sellers screams and struggles to hold onto her child. Ms. Sellers was choked by hospital security, arrested for 2nd degree disorderly conduct, and baby Zepidiah was brought into foster care.

You may be wondering what horrible thing Ms. Sellers could have possibly done to have her two day old child literally ripped from her arms- but investigations show no evidence that she neglected or abused her child, instead she was reported by a hospital staff member for wanting to stay with her child at all times, and refused to have him taken to the nursery alone due to covid concerns.

Continues on next page...



Feature: Rainbow Rodeo Collective

In the summer of 2021, women and queer artists came together to form the Rainbow Rodeo collective -- a group for those concerned with the lack of queer and women representation in the Eugene art and house show scene. Rainbow Rodeo began as a collaborative effort between house show organizers and the collective's founders, who at the time had planned to create a pop-up shop for queer and women artists to sell their art and clothing to fellow community members.

Speaking with co-founder, Dani, there was an overwhelming response from the community who sought the creation of a space created specifically for women and the queer community. Dani described the importance of that night as a special opportunity for local queer and women artists to share their creations within the community, giving a familiar face and name to those with whom they could exchange their creations, directly visualizing the support of their local community.

The group received an immense amount of support from social media as students and community members flocked to this new platform for women and queer voices. The disregard for women and queer safety voiced by the founders of the RR clearly resonated with the community as DM's flooded their social media pages asking when the next event would occur. The formation of the group followed shortly after continued interest in supporting queer and female artists in the community was expressed. For Madeleine, another member of RR, the



experience of organizing the pop-up empowered them to realize the ease by which they could organize community projects and make a real difference. Establishing fundraisers, open mics, drag shows and music festivals that promote the work, participation, and uplifting of these artists are among the future objectives of Rainbow Rodeo.

An additional goal for Rainbow Rodeo is the creation of safe spaces in the house show scene. Co-founder of RR, Dani, stated bluntly that members of their community do “not feel safe” in these environments and, furthermore, are not provided a platform to display their art in a space that feels supportive and welcoming -- most of these scenes are composed of male, white artists. Providing security at these events and hosting their own house shows is RR's direct approach at tackling these issues and changing the culture to a more inclusive and safe environment.

If you would like to know more about Rainbow Rodeo, follow them on instagram: @rainbowrodeo Eugene or follow their Slack at rainbow-rodeo.slack.com



Day of Demands Continued. from pg. 3...

To engage in the spirit of the season and lighten the tone of the event, organizers arranged for a variety of other fun, community-based activities to take place. Between speeches, organizations tabled and engaged with the community, crafted DIY buttons and painted posters, and even hoisted two piñatas: one shaped like a dead pig head donned with a UOPD cap and the other representing the Board of Trustees. Students and attendees sought catharsis as they flogged the fixtures about, the crowd let out satisfied jeers and cries of delight once the piñatas burst. These tactics proved effective by engaging the public with the Reclaim UO movement in an approachable and festive way.

Throughout the day, passerby generally responded with positive intrigue, and no conspicuous conflicts occurred. Much of the event's goals were accomplished in its outreach, in part due to location, the number of participants, and its promotion/organization. Most importantly, the day rebuilt affinity group relations that were severed by the COVID-19 pandemic and college online. It succeeded in organizing a large, laterally organized coalition on campus and illustrated the agency we possess as both academics and activists.

While the event fostered solidarity amongst attendees, neoliberal complacency still seems to have an imposing and firm grip on much of campus. Despite the event's central location, the majority of pedestrians on campus that day simply shrugged and walked past the fishbowl, unmotivated to engage with

radical movements at the university. Evidently, our presence on campus is needed more than ever. We must take responsibility for combating apoliticism and apathy at the UO. The college campus has historically served as a catalyst for social and political change; it is imperative that we reignite that legacy and continue to engage with the university community in a way that will work to affect larger policy changes.

We made our demands heard in the heart of campus, but were we loud enough to be heard over the constant cha-ching, dollars being made, ringing in Schill's ears? Despite being formally invited to attend the event, a reaction or response is yet to be seen from Johnson Hall suits and the Board of Trustees. I suppose this just means we'll have to keep these actions up until they have no choice but to listen...

Education existed long before capitalism, yet students today seem to take for granted the fact that we possess the economic and social power to sever profit from the American university. As a collective student body, we possess the social capital necessary to liberate the pursuit of knowledge from the pursuit of profit. These possibilities are demonstrated by the commitment of radical organizations on campus to collective organization. The attendees of Day of Demands dared to imagine an anti-capitalist future of college in America, if this energy is maintained we may one day soon see these demands realized.

Child Protective Services: Continued from pg. 14...

The hospital staff that reported her described her as “angry and overactive” and that the baby was “at risk for neglect”. First of all, what is “Risk of neglect”? There is either neglect or there isn't, second: Ms. Sellers had just given birth days prior, being over-reactive and overprotective of her child are not reasons to have said child ripped from her arms. Baby Zepinah is still in foster care as of October 2021, and Ms Sellers has been struggling to retain her parental rights.

Ms. Sellers is only one of many recent examples of stories that have gone viral surrounding CPS targeting black families. However this is a systemic issue that has existed within the child welfare and privatized adoption systems since their founding. Those with the privilege to protect themselves from CPS can, while the marginalized are left to fend from themselves and attempt to escape the moving target placed on their back by the child welfare system. Not only do these families have to protect themselves from CPS themselves, but also their neighbors, doctors, and anyone else they interact with. It only takes one false report for a child to be taken away, and with the racial biases that exist in the US, this is a constant fear for many marginalized families.

Students' Cooperative Association

Now Accepting Applications for Fall 2021

The SCA is a non-profit, member-owned housing cooperative located next to the UO campus. Our houses include the Lorax Manor, the Campbell Club and the Janet Smith. We accept both students and non-students, and would love applications from individuals who hold radical political beliefs. Check us out at eugenescsca.com!

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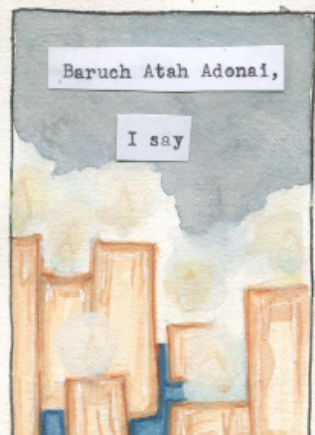
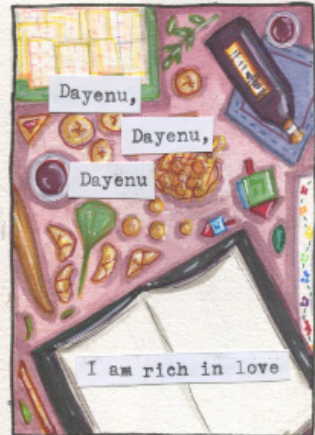
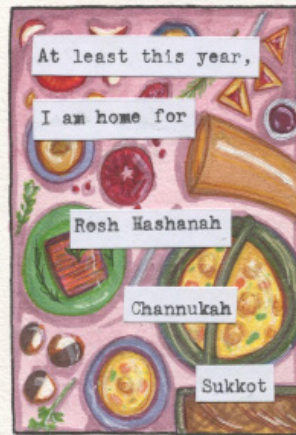
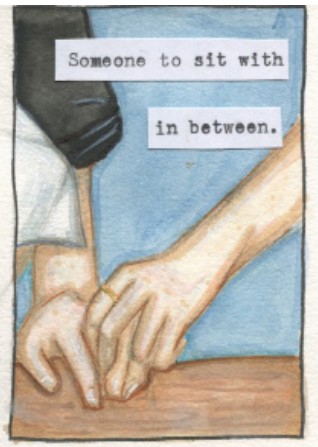
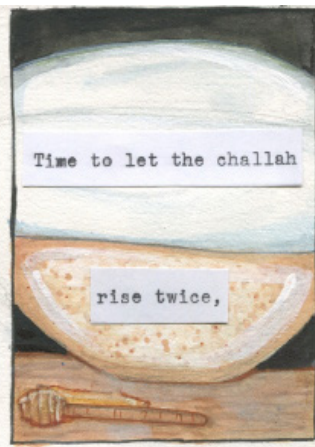
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